

August 31, 2001

MEMORANDUM TO: Office Directors and Regional Administrators
(See attached list)

FROM: William D. Travers */RA/*
Executive Director for Operations

SUBJECT: EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

By now, we have all had the opportunity to read and reflect on the SES Candidate Development Program (CDP) Report on Internal Communications. I believe the report provided some significant insights into the ongoing challenge of internal communications at the agency. Based on my review of the report, and our discussions of internal communications issues at the Agency Action Review Meeting in Atlanta, some initial expectations in this area are outlined below.

Office Directors are ultimately accountable for achieving good communications by ensuring information “cascades” down to the staff level. It is clear to me that the management team has been working harder to enhance our internal communications. The CDP report indicates that additional effort is necessary. As part of this effort, I expect all management teams to be visible to their staff - this may mean that you attend as many staff meetings as possible, and you “manage by walking around,” or that you make it a point to use other means for getting your messages to the staff. I encourage you to use e-mail to share information and relay some key messages to your staff. However, face-to-face, informal communication is frequently the most effective method for communicating in the long run, particularly when it comes from first-line supervisors and is reinforced by senior managers.

It is also incumbent upon you to ensure your staff is conducting internal meetings in the most effective and efficient manner possible. When appropriate, agendas or handouts should be developed, and the goals for the outcome of the meeting clearly stated ahead of time. In addition, resulting assignments should be reviewed and short summaries distributed after each meeting, as appropriate. I refer you to the instructor-led and self-study training courses on conducting meetings sponsored by HR. These courses should be considered for all staff who plan and conduct meetings, and the written training materials and templates provided by the instructor should be used and shared.

Some of the feedback in the SES CDP report on internal communications reveals that many staff members state that they don’t understand the rationale for agency decisions. They are notified when a decision is made but don’t understand the background or the genesis of the decision. Make communicating with your staff a priority, much as you have made a priority of high-quality technical or administrative products. Inform your staff of decisions and explain why they were made.

Encourage staff who work closely on an issue to brief senior management when the opportunity arises. Ask your staff their opinions and obtain their feedback. I believe these techniques will help lead to improved internal communication and enhanced performance.

I have asked Patricia Norry, Deputy Executive Director for Management Services, to develop tools to measure our performance in the area of internal communications. Measurement will allow us to gauge how well our goals are being achieved and thus track our progress. Additionally, we plan to continue to assess “best practices” for enhancing internal communications across the agency. All strategies need not be identical in every office, but experience should suggest strategies that are particularly effective. Please keep Mrs. Norry apprised of successful initiatives used within your organization.

As the agency’s leaders, I expect each of you to exert a significant amount of effort into this initiative and I challenge you to be role models to enhance internal communications in the agency.

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 DEDM r/f
 M. Landau

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*See previous concurrence

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DATE	08/ 21 /01 *	08/ 21 /01 *	08/31/01	

MEMORANDUM TO THOSE ON THE ATTACHED LIST DATED: August 31, 2001

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George M. Hornberger, Chairman, Advisory Committee on Nuclear Waste	T-2	E26
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Hubert J. Miller, Regional Administrator, Region I	RGN-I	
Bruce S. Mallett, Acting Regional Administrator, Region II	RGN-II	
James E. Dyer, Regional Administrator, Region III	RGN-III	
Ellis W. Merschoff, Regional Administrator, Region IV	RGN-IV	